

May 22, 1966

#A109

(AGENCIES & RADIO OUT)

(1,400)

ADVANCE FOR SUNDAY AMS, MAY 22

(ADVANCE) WASHINGTON--2ND ADD, THE PERSONALIZED PRESIDENCY
(A104) X X X ALL JOB.

IN THE LONG HOURS AND FURIOUS ENERGY HE GIVES HIS JOB, THIS PRESIDENT APPEARS TO REFLECT AN INSTINCTIVE ASSUMPTION, THAT EVERYBODY WANTS TO WORK THAT LONG AND HARD.

"HE LIVES IN A WORLD OF ACHIEVEMENT AND ASSUMES YOU DO, TOO," SAYS A MAN WHO HAS WORKED CLOSELY WITH JOHNSON SINCE HIS SENATE DAYS. "IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE A REPORTER, BE ANOTHER RICHARD HARDING DAVIS; A CHEMIST, ANOTHER LOUIS PASTEUR; AN ENGINEER, ANOTHER GEORGE GOETHALS.

"IF YOU'RE SENATE MAJORITY LEADER, BE THE BEST EVER. IF YOU'RE PILING UP A LEGISLATIVE RECORD, PILE UP THE BIGGEST. IF YOU'RE PRESIDENT, BE THE GREATEST. HE THINKS IN TERMS OF SUPERLATIVES. HIS WORLD IS ONE OF CONSTANT STRIVING. MOST OF US GET TIRED OF STRIVING ALL DAY. NOT LYNDON JOHNSON."

THIS SAME KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCE ALSO HAS A THEORY ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKABLE PURSUIT OF DETAIL. IT RELATES, HE SAYS, TO THE SOUTHWEST IN WHICH JOHNSON GREW UP, WHERE PEOPLE HAD TO LEARN TO BE SELF-SUFFICIENT, TO DOCTOR THEIR OWN SICK, TO FIX THEIR OWN TRACTORS.

"HE IS FOND OF RECALLING A FRIEND'S ADMONITION: 'THE BEST WAY TO FERTILIZE YOUR LAND IS WITH THE OWNER'S OWN TRACKS.' IN OTHER WORDS, IF SOMETHING NEEDS DOING, YOU PERSONALLY SEE THAT IT'S DONE."

THE PRESIDENT LIVES, TOO, IN A WORLD OF ACTION, SAYS ANOTHER MAN WHO HAS OBSERVED HIM CLOSELY. LONG REFLECTION AND PROTRACTED DISCUSSION MAKE HIM IMPATIENT. "I WANT ACTION," HE TELLS AIDES, AND THEN HE SPELLS IT OUT FOR EMPHASIS, "A--C--T--I--O--N."

HE HAS TO KNOW MUCH ABOUT MANY SUBJECTS AND ASSUMES HIS ASSISTANTS DO, TOO. THUS, AT THE END OF THE DAY, WHEN HE'S SIGNING THINGS--LEGISLATION, LETTERS, EXECUTIVE ORDERS OR PICTURES--HE HANDS THEM BACK, WITHOUT TURNING, TO WHICHEVER ASSISTANT HAPPENS TO BE BEHIND HIM. HE ASSUMES THAT PERSON KNOWS WHAT TO DO WITH THEM.

#A110

AS PRESIDENT, JOHNSON RARELY TRAVELS ABROAD TO PRACTICE PERSONAL DIPLOMACY BUT AT HOME HIS PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS CAN BE PRODIGIOUS. WHEN PRIME MINISTER INDIRA GANDHI OF INDIA VISITED WASHINGTON, THE PRESIDENT GAVE HER SO MUCH TIME, SAYS A HIGH-RANKING OFFICIAL, "THEY WERE PRACTICALLY GOING STEADY. BUT THE PRESIDENT HAD A PURPOSE AND THAT WAS TO SYMBOLIZE TO ALL OF ASIA HIS CONCERN FOR INDIA."

FOR THE SAME REASON, THIS OFFICIAL SAYS, IT WAS NOT SIMPLY IMPULSE THAT PROMPTED JOHNSON TO DROP IN ON THE RECEPTION FOR MRS. GANDHI AT THE INDIAN EMBASSY, WHERE HE WAS NOT EXPECTED. THE IMPRESSION OF IMPULSIVENESS WAS HEIGHTENED BY THE SUDDEN GAME OF MUSICAL CHAIRS AT DINNER, WHERE HUBERT HUMPHREY GAVE HIS SEAT TO THE PRESIDENT, DEAN RUSK YIELDED TO HUMPHREY, CHESTER BOWLES MOVED OVER FOR RUSK AND WAY DOWN AT THE END OF THE PROTOCOL CHAIN A MINOR INDIAN SECRETARY HAD TO GO TO BLAIR HOUSE FOR DINNER.

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THE STEEL DISPUTE LAST FALL WAS PROBABLY A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF PRESIDENTIAL INVOLVEMENT AND SYMBOLISM. HE SENT A PLANE FOR THE NEGOTIATORS, SET THEM UP IN OFFICES NEXT TO THE WHITE HOUSE, PERSUADED THEM TO EXTEND THE STRIKE DEADLINE, KEPT THEM NEGOTIATING LONG HOURS, SAW THAT THEY WERE FED, REMINDED THEM FREQUENTLY OF THE PUBLIC'S CONCERN OVER A STRIKE, TOLD EACH SIDE HOW HE UNDERSTOOD THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THEIR CONSTITUENTS BUT THAT "MY CONSTITUENCY IS LARGER," LET IT BE KNOWN SEVERAL TIMES THAT LADY BIRD WAS IMPATIENTLY WAITING FOR HIM TO JOIN HER IN TEXAS FOR THE LABOR DAY WEEKEND AND, FINALLY, AS THE NEGOTIATORS WERE APPROACHING A SETTLEMENT, THEY LOOKED OUT THE WINDOW AND THERE WAS THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES IMPATIENTLY WALKING UP AND DOWN THE STREET. THE POINT WASN'T LOST ON THEM; SETTLEMENT SOON FOLLOWED.

#A111

NO PRESIDENT EVER WATCHED THE NEWS MORE CLOSELY, ESPECIALLY THE NEWS SERVICE TICKERS IN HIS OFFICE. SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, HE BEGAN CALLING ADM. WILLIAM RABORN, CIA DIRECTOR, ABOUT EVEN MINOR ITEMS FROM SYRIA AND OTHER FOREIGN DATELINES APPEARING ON THE TICKERS. UNDERSTANDABLY, THE ADMIRAL WAS CAUGHT FLAT-FOOTED. THUS, A SPECIAL CIA WATCH WAS SET UP FOR ANY NEWS ITEM IN WHICH THE CIA MIGHT HAVE EVEN A REMOTE INTEREST AND THE APPROPRIATE EXPLANATION WAS SPED UP TO THE ADMIRAL JUST IN CASE THE PRESIDENT CALLED.

THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS IS ACCUSTOMED TO CONSTANT PERSONAL ATTENTION FROM THE PRESIDENT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE REPORTER WHO FIRST WROTE ABOUT JOHNSON PULLING UP HIS BEAGLE BY THE EARS IS STILL SUBJECTED TO PRESIDENTIAL KIDDING.

AND ONE DAY LAST YEAR, A NEWS AGENCY CARRIED A SMALL STORY ABOUT JOHNSON'S BIRTHPLACE BEING OPENED FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION TOURS. THROUGH AN ERROR IN TRANSMISSION, IT CAME OUT "FEE TOURS." WITHIN MINUTES, THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF WAS ON THE PHONE, POINTING OUT IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN "FREE TOURS."

IT IS IN HIS DEALINGS WITH CONGRESS, WHERE HE CAME TO NATIONAL PROMINENCE, THAT ALL OF JOHNSON'S ARSENAL OF TALENTS AND EXPERIENCE IS BROUGHT TO BEAR IN A PERSONAL WAY. IN THIS HE IS A VIRTUOSO AND IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT ANY LOVER WAS EVER MORE ATTENTIVE OR PERSISTENT.

HE HAS WINED THEM AND DINED THEM, PETTED THEM, SOOTHED THEM, CAJOLED THEM, FLATTERED THEM, CONSOLED THEM, LED THEM, PUSHED THEM, PULLED THEM AND, IN GENERAL, MOVED THEM, AT TIMES LIKE A GENTLE ROMEO LIGHTLY TUGGING A HAND, AT OTHER TIMES LIKE A PASSIONATE WRESTLER ABOUT TO BREAK THE LADY'S ARM.

IT IS SAID THAT EVERETT DIRKSEN, THE REPUBLICAN SENATE MINORITY LEADER, CANNOT GET THE SNIFFLES WITHOUT A SOLICITOUS CALL FROM THE PRESIDENT. HE IS EQUALLY ATTENTIVE OF OTHER IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF CONGRESS. IF ONE HAPPENS TO BE HOSPITALIZED, HE IS APT TO FIND FLOWERS FROM THE JOHNSONS BEFORE HE GETS HIS TEMPERATURE TAKEN. IF IT IS HIS BIRTHDAY, THE PRESIDENT IS LIKELY TO TELEPHONE HIS BEST WISHES. OTHER TIMES, THE PRESIDENT MAY CALL TO CONGRATULATE HIM ON A SPEECH.

THE STORY IS TOLD THAT ONCE THE PRESIDENT WAS HAVING DIFFICULTY FINDING SOMETHING NICE TO SAY TO A SOUTHERN SENATOR WHOSE VOTE HE NEEDED. THE SENATOR HAD DONE NOTHING LATELY, HADN'T SPONSORED A BILL OR MADE A SPEECH OR EVEN BEEN SICK. FINALLY, IT IS SAID, THE PRESIDENT CALLED TO CONGRATULATE HIM FOR INSERTING A MINOR EDITORIAL IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. IT WAS A LITTLE LIKE A BRAIN SURGEON CROSSING THE STREET TO ADMIRE

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#A112

"THE STORIES OF THE PRESIDENT'S ARM-TWISTING ARE GREATLY EXAGGERATED," SAYS A MAN WHO PRESUMABLY COULD HAVE BEEN A TWISTEE. "HE JUST TOUCHES A FEW PEOPLE, THE KEY MEN, AND HE KNOWS WHERE TO TOUCH THEM. MOSTLY, THOUGH, HE DOES IT THROUGH ATTENTION AND THEY ARE FLATTERED.

"LIKE A GEIGER COUNTER, HE CAN SPOT RESISTANCE A MILE OFF, AND HE CLOSES IN QUICKLY. HE MASSAGES PEOPLE. THE MOMENT HE HEARS OF TROUBLE ON THE HILL HE CALLS A MAN INVOLVED. IF IT'S MIDNIGHT AND THE MAN IS HAVING A PARTY, ALL THE BETTER. WHEN THE MAN GETS OFF THE PHONE, HE SAYS TO HIS GUESTS, 'GUESS WHO CALLED ME?' AND DOESN'T THAT HELP?"

OTHER STUDENTS OF THE JOHNSON "MAGIC" ON THE HILL INSIST HE APPLIES GREAT PRESSURE WHEN THE GOING IS ROUGH, BUT RARELY--AND THAT ONLY WITH A LOSS OF TEMPER--DOES HE USE THE DIRECT THREAT, "AND YOU CAN GO WHISTLE FOR THAT POST OFFICE."

"USUALLY HE WORKS THE OTHER WAY AROUND, WITH THE CARROT," SAID ONE EXPERT. "WHEN THE BUDGET IS DONE, HE IS LIKELY TO CALL A SENATOR AND SAY, 'WELL, I FINALLY WAS ABLE TO PUSH THROUGH THAT FEDERAL BUILDING YOU WANTED.' LATER, HE MAY REMIND HIM OF THE FACT. HE'S ALWAYS BUILDING UP HIS STACK OF IOU'S."

THERE ARE STILL MEMBERS OF CONGRESS SHAKING THEIR HEADS NUMBLY AS A RESULT OF THE CYCLONIC PREKRE BROUGHT BY JOHNSON LAST YEAR TO PUSH THROUGH MRS. JOHNSON'S HIGHWAY BEAUTIFICATION BILL. HE WAS TOLD IN ADVANCE, HE DIDN'T HAVE THE VOTES. BUT HE PERSISTED.

#A113

PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT BILL MOYERS WAS STATIONED OUTSIDE THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE TO MAKE SURE ALL CONCERNED GOT THE MESSAGE. IN THE SENATE, THE BILL'S SPONSORS WERE TARGETS OF A PRESIDENTIAL BARRAGE ON THE PHONE.

"FOR GOD'S SAKE, I'VE GOT TO GET LADY BIRD OFF MY BACK," ONE SENATOR SAYS HE WAS TOLD BY THE PRESIDENT. ALSO: "LADY BIRD KEEPS RUNNING IN HERE SAYING, 'LYNDON, YOU GET ALL YOUR BILLS PASSED. WHY CAN'T YOU GET MINE THROUGH?'"

AND THEN THERE WAS THE SPECTACULAR AFTERNOON OF THE "TEXAS TWIST," AS DIRKSEN DESCRIBED IT. THE PRESIDENT'S 1964 TAX BILL, CALLING FOR TINCONE TAX CUTS, WAS BEFORE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE WHEN ONE SENATOR BEGAN A STAMPEDE WITH AN AMENDMENT REPEALING THE EXCISE TAX ON HIGH SCHOOL BAND INSTRUMENTS. OTHERS QUICKLY FOLLOWED WITH AMENDMENTS REPEALING OTHER EXCISES. BY NOON, ALL THE AMENDMENTS HAD SAILED THROUGH THE COMMITTEE WITH BIG BOTE MARGINS.

BUT AT NOON, LYNDON JOHNSON GOT ON THE PHONE AND DIDN'T LET UP UNTIL HE HAD REVERSED ALL THE AMENDMENTS BY ONE VOTE. ALL THIS DURING THE LUNCH HOUR.

FINALLY, THE WHOLE BILL WAS READY FOR A FLOOR VOTE. THE MAJOR WORK HAD BEEN DONE. THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HAD ALREADY VOTED THE BILL OUT. ALL THAT REMAINED WAS THE USUAL DELAY FOR THE COMMITTEE STAFF TO PREPARE ITS ROUTINE PRESENTATION OF THE BILL. BUT THE PRESIDENT COULDN'T WAIT. HE CALLED THE COMMITTEE CLERK TO SAY HE'D APPRECIATE ANY EXPEDITING SHE COULD DO. HE CALLED THE CLERK NOT ONCE BUT TWICE. NO PRESIDENT COULD CHASE A DETAIL HARDER.

END ADVANCE FOR AMS SUNDAY MAY 22. SENT MAY 7